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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/658,740

09/10/2003

J. David Sandoval

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09/11/2008

NATH & ASSOCIATES
112 South West Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

EXAMINER

ALMATRAHI, FARIS S

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3627

MAIL DATE

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/658,740	Applicant(s) SANDOVAL, J. DAVID	
	Examiner FARIS ALMATRAHI	Art Unit 3627	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 August 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 10 September 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Status of the Application

1. This action is in reply to applicant Request for Continued Examination filed on August 8, 2008.
2. Claims 1 and 9 have been amended.
3. Claim 19 is newly added.
4. Claims 1-19 are pending in this application.

Drawings

4. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the features recited in claims 1-19 such as transferring ownership of one or more empty reusable shipping, placing materials on said one or more reusable shipping structures, acquiring ownership of said one or more reusable shipping structures, valuing said one or more reusable shipping structures, removing the materials, and selling said one or more empty reusable shipping structures must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure

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number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as “amended.” If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either “Replacement Sheet” or “New Sheet” pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. **Claims 1-8 and 10-18** are rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Richards et al. (US Publication No. 2003/0083920 A1) in view of Chien (US Publication No. 2002/0174038 A1).

7. Regarding claim 1, Richards reads on a method of administering cyclic use and movement of one or more reusable shipping structures comprising: a first party

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transferring one or more empty reusable shipping structures to a second party at a first value x ; said second party placing materials on said one or more reusable shipping structures; and a third party acquiring said one or more reusable shipping structures from said second party at a second value y , wherein the shipping structures have materials thereon; wherein said second value y is less than said first value x (Abstract, Figure 1, Paragraph [0014], Paragraphs [0031] – [0032], Paragraphs [0034] – [0035]).

8. Richards fails to explicitly disclose transferring and acquiring ownership of shipping structures.

9. However, Chien discloses a method comprising transferring and acquiring ownership of shipping structures (Claim 16).

10. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the teachings of Chien in the device of Richards reference to include a method comprising transferring and acquiring ownership of shipping structures, for the advantage of providing parties with accountability and control of their own shipping containers.

11. Regarding claim 2, Richards discloses a method further comprising the step of said second party valuing said one or more reusable shipping structures with materials thereon at a second value y (Figure 1, Paragraph [0025], Paragraphs [0031] – [0032]).

12. Regarding claim 3, Richards discloses a method further comprising the step of said third party removing the materials from said one or more reusable shipping structures (Paragraphs [0025] – [0026]).

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13. Regarding claim 4, Richards discloses a method further comprising the step of said third party selling said one or more empty reusable shipping structures (Paragraph [0031]).

14. Regarding claims 5-6, Richards discloses a method wherein a fourth party delivers said one or more reusable shipping structures with materials thereon from said second party to said third party (Figure 1, Paragraph [0025]).

15. Regarding claim 7, Richards discloses a method wherein said second party charges its internal operations a usage fee which is the difference between the first value x and the second value y, for each reusable shipping structure put in use (Paragraph [0034]).

16. Regarding claims 8, Richards discloses a method wherein the first value x is about that of new or fully reconditioned reusable shipping structure (Paragraph [0034]).

17. Regarding claim 10, Richards discloses a method wherein said one or more reusable shipping structures are pallets (Figures 3-4).

18. Regarding claim 11, Richards discloses a method wherein said pallets are wooden pallets (Paragraph [0004]).

19. Regarding claim 12, Richards discloses a method wherein said first party is selected from the group consisting of a shipping structure supplier and a shipping structure recycler (Abstract, Paragraph [0026]).

20. Regarding claim 13, Richards discloses a method wherein said second party is a product manufacturer (Paragraphs [0024] – [0025]).

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21. Regarding claim 14, Richards discloses a method wherein said third party is a product distributor (Paragraph [0025]).

22. Regarding claim 15, Richards discloses a method further comprising said first party reselling one or more empty reusable shipping structures to a second party (Abstract, Paragraphs [0030] – [0031]).

23. Regarding claims 16-18, Richards discloses a method wherein said third party sells said empty reusable shipping structure for an amount about equal to the second value y , greater than the second value y , or less than the second value y (Abstract, Paragraphs [0031] – [0032]).

24. **Claims 9 and 19** are rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over Richards et al. (US Publication No. 2003/0083920 A1) in view of Chien (US Publication No. 2002/0174038 A1) further in view of (EFR Executive Committee and Pallet Subcommittee “Assessing Pallet Cost in Foodservice”, Efficient Foodservice Response, pp. 1-22, 2000).

25. Regarding Claims 9 and 19, Richards fails to explicitly disclose a method comprising assigning the value of y based on a value that is less than market value and wherein the second value y is about sixty percent of the first value x .

26. However, the value of y is regarded as design choice and can obviously be any percentage of the first value x . Furthermore, EFR discloses a method wherein the second value y is about sixty percent of the first value x (Pages 10-13).

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27. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the teachings of EFR in the device of Richards reference to include a method comprising assigning the value of y based on a value that is less than market value and wherein the second value y is about sixty percent of the first value x , for the advantage of providing design choice flexibility.

Response to Arguments

28. Applicant's arguments with respect to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) rejections have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Faris Almatrahi whose telephone number is (571)270-3326. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ryan Zeender can be reached on (571) 272-6790. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Faris Almatrahi
Examiner
Art Unit 3627

FA
/F. Ryan Zeender/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3627